

Shorter Skirts

Second only to the silk-stockings furor is the storm blowing up around women's skirts. Faced with critical shortages of silk, rayon, and other textiles, manufacturers of all types of garments have already laid siege to Washington, seeking assurances of raw-material supplies. Meanwhile, there emerged from the National Women's Undergarment Manufacturers Association last week the startlingly concrete suggestion that at least 10 per cent of the millions of yards of fabrics used in fashions might be saved by shortening the length of skirts and slips.

An immediate counterattack was launched by some of those who set the styles. The Fashion Originators Guild termed shorter skirts silly and added that dresses "are just as short today as decency and grace will permit." The National Dress Manufacturers Association felt that "anything can happen, of course, but if skirts do get shorter look out for traffic congestion."

As for American women, whose hemlines have gone up and down for more than a quarter of a century following a trend curiously similar to the curve of business activity (see chart) they would probably resist any reversal of the current downward trend from recent knee-length levels. If the ladies can't have sheer hose, they certainly don't want shorter skirts. But for national defense they might accept the elimination of pleats, tiers, pep-lums, and other material-consuming fullness. Meanwhile, the underwear association which started the whole controversy sat back complacently, confident that they had accomplished their aim by setting people "to thinking how fabric yardage may be conserved in the present emergency."

Newsweek

SEPTEMBER 1, 1941

p. 35

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